

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR**

**THE NORTHERN MICHIGAN TURF MANAGERS
ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER, 1986**

Seasons greetings from your Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association board of directors. I trust that all of you are now able to breathe a little easier with the year nearing completion. I'm sure that 1986 will not be soon forgotten by anyone in the turf management business. Beginning with a winter that would'nt quit and a spring that never was, this year got off to a charging start that set a pace for the entire season. For many of us, long postponed projects and construction leapt forth from hiding as interest rates fell, and we found ourselves not only fighting to keep the grass cut, but accomplishing miraculous feats of the impossible by starting a project today and finishing it yesterday. As if that were not enough, golfers seemed to take clubs out of mothballs at record rates to once again pursue the dimpled sphere across Northern Michigan. Just when we thought we had it all under control, Noah gathered his legions on his fabled arc and sailed off to Mount Ararat leaving us searching the swamp to find and pull the plug. Finally, nature played a joke and gave us all a good leg pulling with an early snowfall catching most of us with half or none of our snow mold controls down. While sages like Steve White were certain a thaw would prevail, there was panic in Mudville owing to the recent remembrance that the thaw never came last year. Ah, Stevie, you were right again. But one of these years...

So, here we find ourselves staring out the door in semi-shock, wondering if it was just yesterday we were trying to get that last drain installed or one more tree planted before the season ended, and thinking that already the winter is too short to get everything ready for next year. Such is the everyday life of a turf manager in Northern Michigan. And, we love it.



As many of you already know, we have some new additions to our board. Elected at our annual meeting were Damien Kirkowski from Sylvan Resort, David Sapp from Scott's Pro Turf, Paul Holmes from the Gaylord Country Club, and Tom Brogger from Birchwood Farms. Leaving the board with our thanks for a job well done were Steve White of the Traverse City Country Club and Bob Rieschl of the Crystal Lake Golf and Country Club. Staying on as past president for one year is Dave Longfield and Tom Reed has been appointed Executive Secretary. At our organizational meeting in October, Paul Holmes was elected Vice President, Bob McElheny was elected Treasurer, and I, Jon Scott, am honored to have been elected President. We have an excellent board for 1987 and the work began by the '86 Board will continue in earnest.

At our October meeting hosted by Paul Holmes and Dan Webster of the Gaylord Country Club, we had a most successful second annual Tuck Tate Chapter Championship. Low Gross honors went to our host, Paul Holmes, with the Low Net trophy going to Jim Cole of Greenmaster Lawn Care, Benzonia. In addition to receiving a trophy, Tuck Tate generously presented Jim with a very fine Rolex watch as a permanent memento of his achievement. Closest to the pin on #4 went to Joe Burda of Leland C.C., #6 to Al Semrad of Ludington Hills, #11 to Barry Owens, and #12 to Jim Cole. Longest Drive also went to Jim Cole and if that wasn't enough, he also was the big winner of the skins game. Congratulations to all the winners and to Paul and Dan for an excellently run tournament on a beautifully conditioned golf course.

At our November board meeting, committee assignments were given as follows: Program and Golf, Paul Holmes and Charlie Menefee; Education and Scholarship, Jim Bogart and Jim Ollie; Membership, David Sapp and Tom Reed; M.T.F. Benefit Day, Tom Brogger, Jim Ollie, and Paul Holmes; By-Laws and Ethics, Dave Longfield, Bob Stienhurst, and Charlie Menefee; and Public Relations, Jon Scott and Bob McElheny. These chairmen will be calling on the membership for assistance in carrying out their various assignments and if anyone is interested in serving on a particular committee, contact either the chairman or myself.

Also at this board meeting, Charlie Menefee volunteered to be appointed GCSAA Liaison to coordinate all correspondence and activities relative to the national association with our chapter. This is a long term appointment and requires a commitment on the part of the position to represent our members' interests with the national and communicate any pertinent information to the chapter from GCSAA. Charlie deserves our thanks for taking on this responsibility.

A discussion was held at the board meeting on setting goals for our association for 1987 and beyond. One of the key tools in doing so will be the

membership survey taken in 1986. With this as a guide, we hope to remain responsive to our membership while still serving the interests of the whole. If any of you have comments or ideas you would like to submit, either contact your nearest board member or myself. We want to serve you, and the only way to be sure that is happening is to hear from you. I will be submitting periodic reports to you via this newsletter on what the board is discussing from month to month. Feel free to comment on any issue you find good, bad, or otherwise. We want this association to serve its members, not the other way around.

One of the ways to set goals for tomorrow is to review yesterday's accomplishments and failures. In 1986, we had one of the most successful years in association history. Our educational program was second to none with speakers such as Warren Bidwell, Jim Beard, Paul Rieke, Joe Vargas, etc., we were presented with some of the very best. Our spring mini-conference at the Traverse City Country Club rivalled that of associations twice our size and ran like clockwork. We conducted a membership survey and produced a report that was envied by many other state organizations and commended by GCSAA. We completely re-vamped our membership book with a new look and format that exemplifies the pride we have in the Northern Michigan turf industry. By putting the book on computer, future issues can be produced quickly and less expensively than before. Further utilization of new technology was done by putting the membership records on computer discs for ease of updating and reference. We conducted two of the most successful fund raisers in the country with our MTF Benefit at Shanty Creek and our Michigan Musser Classic at Grand Traverse Resort totalling over \$11,000 in research monies. We were one of the first chapters in the country to take advantage of the newly produced GCSAA ads promoting the superintendent as a professional and ran 30 half-minute spots during the Michigan Open and the rest of July. We were also pioneers in holding one of the first video seminars made available by GCSAA for credit. Finally, we continued to encourage attendance at our monthly meetings by giving away green blazers to lucky ticket holders at each meeting. As might be expected, attendance this year was excellent.

This is quite a list of achievements to accomplish in one year! It was not done without a great deal of work and enthusiasm on the part of the board and association members. It is hard to expect that we can continue this pace in 1987, and we obviously will not be able to. Owing to the realities of our first priorities, our jobs and our families, we must set a schedule for '87 that can be accomplished without compromising either. We will not, however, step backwards. It is time to strengthen the progress already made and carefully evaluate the directions yet to come. We must stay within our financial means, and we must not step out too far in front of our membership. It is therefore important that all of us get involved in this process, and the time is right now.

For most of us, the winter gives us a chance to reflect on our needs, both personal and professional. There is no better way to serve both than to attend the winter conferences and seminars. MTF and Michigan State University will hold their 1987 turf conference January 12th-14th at the Clarion Convention Center (formerly Longs) in Lansing. If you have not yet received your registration form, contact either Dr. Paul Rieke or Dr. Bruce Branham at Michigan State. Their phone numbers and address are listed in your membership booklet. This year's program is up to the usual high standards and promises to be one of the best yet. Please plan to attend. If money is a little tight, get out your membership book and call a fellow member to share expenses. For as little as \$100, you can get information that may make the difference between a successful season and trouble.

Of course, for those that can afford it, the GCSAA International Conference and Show in Phoenix is the ultimate in professional learning. Nowhere else in the world can you be exposed to as much experience, technical information, and product presentation. The options for educational benefits are almost limitless. You can learn more in two days of exposure at the "National" than you can in a year of problem solving on your own. It is, without a doubt, the best our profession has to offer.

I have just returned from the Ohio Turf Conference in Columbus. It is one of the best regional conferences in the country. No one should ever consider attending this instead of MSU's, however, as most of the data presented at OSU pertains to Ohio's warmer climate. But if you are fortunate to be able to attend both, I highly recommend it. In fact, for those of you unable to attend the National, you might consider putting this on your schedule for 1987. Total cost can be under \$500 for three days (less if you pack a lunch). Most of the major turf companies are represented at a fantastic trade show, and the facility is top notch. Again, if you share the expenses with another, you can get by for much less. The most important thing is to get some technical exposure during the off season.

While at the Ohio conference, I attended a series of presentations concerning the current move by environmental concerns to limit or ban pesticide applications by commercial applicators. That includes all of us in NMTMA. The lawn, tree, and shrub maintenance companies are already on the defensive after a year of solid attacks by the media and special interest groups. It was just a matter of time before golf courses were targeted as well. The thrust of the series was to make all of us aware that these groups are well organized and well funded. The most interesting information suggested that it is the public perception of chemicals that results in legislation limiting their use and not fact. Therefore, if we cannot properly educate the public ahead of the negative publicity generated by the special interest groups, we will be

facing severe restrictions on the management of turf pests. We, in Northern Michigan, are prime targets as most of us cater to tourist play and services. These people have no vested interest in protecting a particular club or company from those who may be out to set an example for local legislation. It was the realization as stated at the conference that legislation begins at the local level and moves upward to the national. A classic example of the "trickle-up" theory. There is already a law in California which allows citizens to turn in suspected violators of pesticide regulations in return for a reward or "bounty" on assignment of penalty by the courts. This has repercussions that could have all of us on the run in a short time unless we stay informed as to what is happening in our state legislature. Your association will do its best to bring such information to you via this newsletter.

Another presentation by Dr. Houston Couch of Virginia Tech. suggested that we all could do better at proper calibration of our spray equipment. How many of us change nozzle tips regularly? Who knows what the spray pressure is at the boom and not the pump? Do you know how much water is optimum for the best results of the chemical you are spraying? Couch recommends the 2 gallon per thousand rule for most pesticides with the exception of Daconil performing best at 1 gallon. He also found that 30-40 psi at the nozzle is the optimum pressure for best performance of most chemicals. And, rainfall or irrigation after the chemical has dried on the leafblade does not usually diminish the effectiveness of the product. He strongly recommends 8002 flat fan nozzles or the new swirl jet series from Hahn. It is his finding that if any of us are using field jets for spraying, we're wasting our time and money. He is currently working on how pH affects chemical performance, and his preliminary findings show that most chemicals are properly formulated with buffers to lower or raise pH as needed. There is obviously more to pesticide applicating than just getting the chemical to the target.

Some of our members are taking advantage of the off season to further their professional standing by earning the title Certified Golf Course Superintendent. This not only reflects the highest recognition we can achieve as a superintendent for our experience and education, but also furthers the exposure of the golf superintendent as a professional in the business community. This translates to better wages and benefits as well as more credibility with management and club members.

One member recently completing the requirements for CGCS is David Little of Lakewood Shores in Oscoda. Our congratulations go to Dave for his accomplishment and we are honored to have him in our association. Another member achieving CGCS status this year was Dave Longfield of Garland. It should also be noted that Jim Ollie, Charlie Menefee, and Jim Tollefson are currently working on completing the required course of study. We will soon

be adding their congratulations to a future newsletter. I urge any superintendent who can meet the requirements for certification to apply for that status. You will never regret it.

We are again planning to offer a videotape seminar in 1987. We have not decided on which one yet, so be looking for an announcement after the Holidays. One of the criteria will be credit availability and reasonable length. Last year was somewhat of an ordeal, so we're investigating shorter ones. We also may hold it in Grayling which may be more accessible to the membership. The cost will be reasonable, so be ready to sign up as soon as possible.

There are still three dates unspoken for to host 1987 meetings. The June MTF Benefit, July, and October Tate Classic are still open. Please contact Tom Reed or myself if you are interested and we will present it for board approval. Remember, there is no more understanding group of people in the world than your friends. Never be ashamed of your facility or the condition of your course when it comes to hosting a meeting. We consider it an honor and a privilege to play a fellow professional's course. The last thing we would do is criticize.

Your 1987 dues are now payable. All of you should have received your notice in the mail by this date. If you have not, please contact Tom Reed immediately and a notice will be sent you. Tom reports that many of you have already sent in your check, and we thank you. 1986 has been hard on the treasury and we want to continue the programs begun last year as well as add new ones as the need is determined. This can only be done if we continue to support our association with timely payment. With the advent of computerized membership records, we will be screening members who are delinquent in their dues. Please avoid the unpleasantness of delinquent notices and cessation of membership services by sending your check as soon as possible.

In closing, I'd like to call your attention to an article at the end of this newsletter. It more than speaks for itself. Understand that this piece appeared in the December issue of GOLF magazine read by most of the active golfers in the United States. This is what we're up against people, and we have but a short time to prepare for it.

Let's all wish for a successful New Year.

Killer Courses

Golf course pesticides can harm more than their intended targets

by BOB CONDOR

More than four years have passed since U.S. Navy Lieutenant George Prior died from a mysterious ailment that doctors traced to the Army Navy Country Club near Arlington, Virginia. Prior played golf three straight days while on leave in August 1982. After the first two, he returned home with moderate headaches and nausea, but following the third day, Prior grew weak and a blistering rash spread across his stomach. He checked into a hospital. Within two weeks, his skin festered and scabbed, his internal organs failed and he died of a heart attack. Prior was 30 years old.

An expert Navy forensic pathologist, Dr. Jonathan Lord, concluded that the cause of death was a severe allergic reaction to Daconil 2787, a common fungicide sprayed weekly on the Army Navy course to control brown spots on the greens. Among the Navy doctor's evidence: A chemical similar to Daconil allegedly killed a Florida family after it was used to fumigate their house; Prior had a history of health complaints after playing golf; the club's grounds

and Prior's equipment and clothing tested positive for Daconil.

Prior's wife filed a \$20 million lawsuit against the Army Navy Country Club and Daconil's manufacturer, Diamond Shamrock Corp. The case remains in litigation.

Although most golfers play on pesticide-sprayed courses without ill effects, Prior is not the first golfer to experience flu-like symptoms after a round. "I used to have all kinds of trouble playing in Florida," says Billy Casper. "One year, in the National Airlines tournament near Miami, I had to withdraw after 36 holes even though I was two shots off the lead. The course had been heavily sprayed, and there was weed killer in a lake. When I got to the course for the third round, I couldn't hit a wedge shot 30 yards—I didn't have the strength. My eyes were bloodshot, my complexion was very ruddy and my right hand was swollen from taking balls from the caddie. My doctor diagnosed acute pesticide poisoning."

Casper, who now credits vitamin and mineral supplements with helping him stay

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Alfred Gerschmidt

stronger on sprayed courses, says there were times when "I couldn't think my way out of a paper bag" during a tournament round. "I found I couldn't reason on heavily-treated courses."

Dr. Samuel Epstein, an expert on environmental toxicology at the University of Illinois Medical Center, confirms that "Golfers are greatly exposed to pesticides. Direct contact encourages absorption of toxic materials through the skin and sometimes ingestion. Recently-sprayed pesticides do volatilize on hot days, leading to the additional risk of inhalation."

Golfers affected by pesticides will experience several early symptoms, including memory loss, fatigue, headaches, nausea and dizziness. But although Epstein recognizes the potential seriousness of these symptoms, he is more concerned about the long-term ill-effects of pesticides. "Golfers spend a good deal of time on golf courses, up to four hours or so a day," he explains. "That's a high level of exposure to a number of chemical agents that produce delayed effects, such as birth defects, neurological disorders and cancer. A golf course is essentially a hazardous site, and it's time golfers realize they are captive to an industry [lawn care] that is indifferent and ignorant about the public health."

In the early 1970s, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was mandated by Congress to register all pesticides used on turf. That means testing and approving any new product on the market. But because many golf course pesticides predate 1970, they were granted exemptions from extensive testing for EPA approval. Now the Federal agency periodically "re-registers" existing pesticides, but testing doesn't appear any more rigid.

The EPA will respond to "any valid data showing chronic effects such as carcinogens, birth defects or bird kill," says Henry M. Jacoby, the EPA's product manager for agricultural fungicides. Jacoby reports that "Diazinon," made by Ciba-Geigy, is a pesticide

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under special review. It is likely to be disapproved for golf course use by year-end, due to numerous incidents of birds (mostly geese and other water fowl) dying.

Golf course superintendents also have their hands full with the pesticide issue. "Some courses forbid spraying when members are playing," says Jim Snow, a turf management director for the United States Golf Association. "They'll close one day each week to apply the pesticides."

However, Snow maintains that attention to spraying seems to have turned into a witch hunt, "making golfers paranoid about something that isn't all that critical. Most pesticides and fertilizers used on golf courses are quite tame, and the people applying them are professionals."

The USGA is studying alternative methods of pest control, as are some local golf superintendent groups. "Pesticides and fertilizers are our biggest expense items," says Ed Nash, golf superintendent at the Bass River Golf Course in South Yarmouth, Massachusetts, which is participating in a local pesticide study of Cape Cod courses. "We have no economic interest in using chemicals if we don't have to. We're looking at ways to integrate pest management by using less water with safer chemicals. After all, we're exposed more than anybody else because we apply it."

Experts offer these suggestions:

- Pay attention to early symptoms (memory loss, fatigue, headaches, nausea, dizziness). They are the body's built-in warning signals.
- Insist that your course's management provide detailed information about what pesticides are used and that signs be posted after spraying.
- Wear long pants and socks. Never play in bare feet.
- Keep the ball away from your mouth. Never lick it to clean it.
- If you have sensitive skin, try not to wipe your face or neck with your hands. Handling the ball with your glove hand also helps.
- Wash hands immediately after playing. ■

